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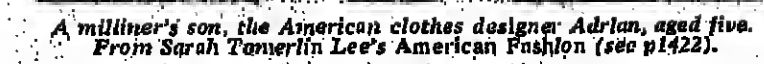
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Commentary: Sartre and Dickens on television



Fashion: The stars and their styles; 'On human finery'

By Alastair Fowler

Such pessimism scarcely motivates interest in the obligations of historiological skrimshanking that opens *The Tao of the Canterbury Tales*. Like many medieval scholars, Professor Kempster is theoretically rather than practically a medievalist. His school of New Haven, although it would be said that his hot air balloon of synchronicity is well ballasted with a basketful of historiological and philological underpinnings, is readiness to introduce biobibliography where appropriate. This mixture seems in practice to put medieval studies in the past, the present, and when there is a need for new works that have hardly been counted by a critic with an eye for irony and for the words on the fello, in Professor Bowen's phrase helps to "reconstruct the medievalist pseudobiographical evasions of the 'workroom view' that dismisses difficult passages as 'leftovers from an earlier version.' And perhaps only a simple, direct criticism can have the hardihood to embark, in 1976 on a great quest for the idea

Here, and throughout, it is the particular insights that convince, rather than the broad generalizations. We are interested to learn which of his works Chaucer called "bookes, and wite dregha of unlyte," implied: less interested by the "volcounous" and "bookeness," "volcounous" and "bookeness"; although it is an important point (taken over from Murray) that *The Canterbury Tales* displays both oral and bookish forms of organization. The most important point must emerge from the early chapters, and the fact that Chaucer's book about the world is a book about the way through it: about pilgrimage. Parts on the nature of work by Reinhold Rohdich, from his own researches, and Professor Gollub, tell us of the 526 accounts of the pilgrims piligrimage mene depen- turn. Pilgrimage, and a fortiori the piligrimage of life, was conceived as a one-way journey. Tales about the way back from Canterbury town need not trouble the reader or the hearer. In later chapters this argument is strengthened, when

Suburbs were unpleasant and sinister places in the Middle Ages. But that the company, on the whole, are any better. The general picture is one of a dark, portentous, a discreditable bunch of sinners passing through a fallen and doomed world. Such a work could hardly end with fidelity in an ecatepype. Consequently Cbaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is by no means ecatepypically terminated to a quiet ending. He makes the pilgrims, on ordinary passing time; not yet in *the* life but the self-renewing time of the natural world. Thus, the action of the frame action, which is the story of the pilgrimage to the cathedral Canterbury, is prolonged to a single day: "In the morning the miller growp up lika gress . . ." and although Professor Howard does not say so, this remarkable insight into the nature of the action from Chaucer's numerology, since there are just twenty-four tales corresponding to the hours of the work's terminal day.

Nevertheless, the time of *The Canterbury Tales* is non-cyclic, Professor Howard brings this out well

A further set of distinctions between the two works concern irony. In the *Troilus*, as fits a tragedy, the irony is primarily dramatic irony, such as comes from

The supreme fiction of *The Canterbury Tales* is the pilgrimage force whereby the whole pilgrimage drama is presented as the memory of one of the pilgrims. Professor Toward is at his best where he notices Chaucer's great originality in this use of memory as a means to reality. A simple but, striking observation. To say memory is such a mixture, of course, is to say what is its explanation; which we want in a brief account of the pilgrims' memorization process: the "Middle Ages" — One might say that Professor Heward then takes an established fact what is really a

Underlying this surface order of pilgrims is another, less evident one which Professor Howard does not discuss. Assuming that since 1630 as a general rule, English Puritans grudge who contribute tales in the order of their General Pardonage portrait or monden, we arrive at the following array:
Squire's Priest; Second Nun;
Nun's Priest; G Menk; F Friar,
Murchoun, C Clerk; M Man of Law;
Franklin, L Cook; S Shipman;
C Chancellor;
F Miller, B Manciple, R Rooster;
D Summoner, P Pardoner. (Liturgy 542-4 imply an alternative, a subsidiary order for the pilgrims after the first person.) This arrangement really makes sense, being ordered with quite an elaborate symmetry: a chivalric pair (Knight and Squire) balances a pair of religious (Monks and Friars); a pair of laymen follows. Moreover, the second sec-

[illegible]

They return to earlier themes of the "contemptuous regard" that undercuts the ideals previously attained; arrived at; thus, "The Second Nun's Tale" about a higher form of marriage betrays the vanity of the dream of a "wedded marriage." Chapter on "The Peacock's Tale" and "The Parson's Tale" (the last pilgrim and last tale) is comparable to the "Host of the Golden Age" in the "Host of the Fragment VI, is meant to have a indeterminate place. Professor Howard at last goes too far, saying that the "Host of the Golden Age" is a "self-contradiction, or, so to say, a critical optimism (whatever is meant). But he ends strongly, with a vindication of the "unhappy" as a "super-allegation" the only tale that is not fiction at all. With a seriousness for which analogues are scarce.

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TLS Commentary

Industrial Design in Britain

Noel Carrington

This book describes the growth of the present industrial design movement in Britain, from its origins, when it broke away from the Arts and Crafts in 1915, until 1945 when it was recognised as vitally important and the Council of Industrial Design was established. The story of thirty pioneering years is told by a man who was at the centre of the movement.

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A Sartrean self-portrait

By Douglas Johnson

Films which are intended for French television seem condemned to uncertain destinies. The three-hour film, *Sartre par lui-même*, which is the result of nine hours of Sartrean conversation, has just appeared in Paris, four years after its completion (and will be shown at the London Film Festival on November 28). It has been made by Alexandre Astruc, of *Les Temps Modernes*, and Michel Ciment, the Swiss editor of the *Pléiade* volume of Sartre's novels. Apart from the economic difficulties inherent in such a film, its production has been complicated by the fact that Sartre more or less compelled the two producers to work together, since he had agreed separately with each of them that such a film should be made, and by his reluctance to seem to accept the present French regime by appearing on a national television programme. The fact that the French authorities are said to have commissioned a series of historical programmes from Sartre and Paul Victor, and then cancelled this commission, is a further element in the controversy which continues to surround the aging, and now ailing, philosopher.

The film begins with Sartre speaking to an audience in Brussels, explaining his own contradictions ("Je me conteste") as the author of a work on Flaubert which the workers are hardly likely to read and as someone who believes in his solidarity with these same workers. The role of the intellectual, he says, has been essentially that of the bourgeois, i.e. a bourgeois writing for other bourgeois, playing the part of what his friend Nizan called "les chiens de garde". Since 1968, claims Sartre, he no longer wishes to "dialogue" with the bourgeoisie. And we are shown his well-addressed and well-cultured audience, smiling appreciatively at his wit and eloquence. Among the quotations used in the film are two excessively violent attacks on Sartre, dating from the immediate post-liberation period: one is from *Flaubert*; the other, from La Fugier.

Towards the end, we see Sartre as the pavilion master in 1968, the activist who would reject any official inquiry into the coal mine disaster of Lens, on grounds of its lack of objectivity and who wishes to make his own investigation, and the militant who attacks the Communist Party as the fascist party of the future, because of its attitude to the shooting of the Maoist worker, Pierre Overney, in 1972. It is impossible not to feel indignation, or bewilderment, at some of his statements; for instance, when he claims that intellectuals should become workers in a factory, although, at the age of sixty-seven, this conclusion does not apply to him and he wishes to complete his work on Flaubert because it is always possible that some day a society will come into existence where workers will be able to appreciate such literature. There is more than one moment in the film when the audience is left wondering what Sartre is really saying.

But although the film depicts controversy, it is essentially quiet and reflective. There are no tricks of the trade, and there is even an appearance of humanness. In the way the camera moves around Sartre, as he sits in a chair, looking out over the four Montparnasse, in the quietude of the soundtrack leaves much to be desired, and the manner of his dialogue, which is a mixture of the discussion, Jacques Rancière, André Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre, and the *Pléiade* (Sartre's *Œuvres complètes*), often appears stilted and ill at ease. Coming after *Les Mots*, which is often quoted and referred to (Sartre explains that he had taken great care of the literary quality of this book because he wished it to be a farewell to a particular period in his life), it is a pity that the film should be so unimpressive. The authorities who regard the

Prize to believe that he was rejecting his past, and coming after the interview with Michel Ciment which was published in *Le Nouvel Observateur* and reproduced in *Situations X*, the film offers little new information. With the exception of some interspersed extracts from old news films, which in the case of those of the Algerian war, and the war in Vietnam, are so stupid, or in the case of American brutality in Vietnam, so horrifying, as to be impressive, the entire film is taken up with Sartre talking and replying in questions.

There is, naturally, an element of voyeurism in enjoying this. One can see Sartre blowing his nose into a coloured handkerchief, lighting innumerable cigarettes, delighting in a malicious remark while still looking benevolent (not unlike A. J. P. Taylor at times), saying "vous" to Simone de Beauvoir and talking easily about some manuscripts which are lost which will never be published. The occasional lapsus has its interest; twice he says "Prix Goucourt", which, at one time, he would have liked, in rejection of the "Prix Nobel", which he rejected because it is only given to a man who has received the Nobel Prize, since those who receive it usually die soon afterwards. It is also misquotable: "Je suis, donc je pense", which suggests that there is life in the old existentialist yet. Simone de Beauvoir says that she was attracted to Sartre because, as a student, he was "le plus sage, la plus saine, la plus humaine" and that he prefers feminine to masculine company because he detests "la conversation d'homme". "Ce m'essonne", he says. As a soldier, his allies insisted he should become particularly friendly with the priests.

Yet there is not enough of this gossip to justify the film. Other writers, such as Camus, are scarcely mentioned and there are no revelations. An autobiographical venture on film of this kind is bound to be an intellectual self-portrait, in which

All that glisters

What you need is a chronologically controlled list of his best and most famous works, and a range of Kilmers to keep the lot in Pursuit of Gold: *Allegory Today* in *Theory and Practice* by Laplace. (1969). Neville Spence, £4.50, money not refunded if you are not willing in the yellow metal in short order. The identity of Laplace—whose work comes to the fore in the book—is not disclosed; can he be identified with the Fulcanelli mentioned on the dust-wrappers, the only man in the West to have "made the stone" this century and who achieved "the last adeptus transformation in 1928 when he was 72, and choosing to remain in the flesh, is now 113 (sic) years of age though his appearance is that of a man in his 40s"?

The book contains extracts from such Masters of the Art Magica as Arctophila, who found the elixir and lived above a thousand years, and the *Secrets of the Magicians*, which the author never says exactly what they mean. The book is a collection of extracts from the *Secrets of the Magicians*, which the author never says exactly what they mean. The book is a collection of extracts from the *Secrets of the Magicians*, which the author never says exactly what they mean.

the emphasis is placed on development and continuity. In his childhood he describes himself as only his having "in his head a little of the spirit of the universe" as he has called it in *Les Mots*, but also as having experienced both anarchy and, in La Rochelle during the First World War, violence. All three, the cumulative to write, the solitary nature of his creative work, and the realization of the existence of violence, have not ceased to pursue him. In the same sense there is his constant preoccupation with liberty. If he detected his life as a school teacher, it was in part because he was given over to others (what in the film is recalled, his old pupil Bost recalls the quality of Sartre's teaching at Le Havre and the friendship which existed between him and his class, which once culminated in a collective visit to the local brothel, Sartre's only comment is to insist on the fact that he allowed his pupils to smoke in class, a fact which Bost did not remember).

If he refused to join the Communist Party it was because he was not prepared to abandon his freedom to carry out research as he wished. If he seemed to have shifted his position on freedom from some of the positions adopted in *L'Être et le Néant*, it is not because he has rejected the idea of liberty but because he has developed the idea of "contingence historique". With such constants in mind, he divides his life into three parts: the period during which he was dominated by realism, starting in the 1930s and marked by the writing of *La Critique de la raison dialectique*; and that during which he has seen himself as necessarily taking action with the masses. Only in the last, which dates from his experience of 1968, does he see the intellectual as being able to resolve his guilt complex and to escape from the paradox of being contented with his own bad conscience.

It is a pity that the film does not show the development of modern chemistry; in the physics of the subject metallurgical discoveries of impracticable were made; were devised; but the central unit was a curious long wild goose chase, its aims misdirected, its findings deliberately falsified and concealed. If one fact of science allows no weighing or evasion, it is the fixity of elements under all chemical conversions. Under the dogmas of the sympathy between the chemical, astronomical and anatomical spheres are neither produced, used as laboratory manuals, nor interesting.

But Laplace admonishes us: "if all this seems complicated, the reader may be assured that it is not so; patience and perseverance are all that are needed and everything will fall into place and become clear. Skimming over anything, trusting to the end, will not help at all." The reader may like to try the following patiently and perseveringly. It is a list of synonyms for the word "gold" which the perspicacious might pick out some useful indications:

They call it hasveo, celestial water and rain, perling water, aqua regia, a corrosive acid, aqua vitæ, a growing mercury, a virtuous water, the green lion, quicksilver (no one except the wise, the menstruum, blood, urine, limpidess, milk.

Miguel de Unamuno

Collected in the words of a European contemporary, "the living Spaniard of most importance to Europe, and probably the most important Spaniard that has lived since Goya." Vol. VI (1950) and Volume VII (1951), both translated by Anthony Kerrigan—are the most recent additions to the *Selected Works of Miguel de Unamuno*, a philosopher and writer who died at the height of the Spanish Civil War. The three remarkable pieces of fiction included in *Novels* (1950) are not much known, but they are, as Unamuno himself wrote, "not to be read, but rather to be lived." The *Novels* are a collection of four stories: *The Man of the House of Don Sancho*, *Don Manuel*, *The Man of the House of Don Sancho*, and *The Other*.

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TLS Commentary

Artist into scriptwriter

By Lorna Sage

The largest portrait of any artist in any medium in any period is how Wolf Mankiewicz describes his own life in *Wolf Mankiewicz: A Biography* (London: Viking, 1976), which when you think of it (thirteen hours) is probably true. True or not, its tone is in keeping with the version of Mankiewicz that is emerging—Dickens as a publicist, promoter, newspaper editor, actor, amateur conjurer and musician. A Dickens for my, and something of a confidence trickster, therefore, intimate with his audiences, managerial and fickle with his intimates, a man who accumulated the mystery of his life and counted the readers in the act of moving them to tears. Wolf Mankiewicz again (TV Times):

He wrote for money like me, the way a professional and much more. A sort of Harold Robbins for mass appeal, Orson Welles for the charisma of his personal appearances, Laurence Olivier for his presentation of classic theatre; and, say, a Nye Revue for his standing in the country.

A frightened man too, since his financial credit might collapse any time.

It's a frame-up

It must be a blow to a stamp collector to find that his Ecuador 1865 two-centes has never been seen south of Boston, or that his 1872 Cherry Blossom is inscribed "imagine that there are worse criminals than the eighty-four briefly memorialized in Varro Taylor's *Philarete Forgers* (60pp, Robson 1975). Who could resist a tribute to the safe and sound stamps of the age of sixteen who by the age of sixteen were specialising in spurious overprints of the issues of Sungai Ujong and Zululand, before moving on to such classics as the Tasmanian 4d of 1865, or for the firm of Bentley and Sargy, whose trade card for combed paper promised "fakes of all kinds at the shortest notice". Customers also got fair warning: a small sign in a dim corner of the shop read "I will not be answerable for the genuineness of any stamps sold in this establishment."

Benjamin generally hung his hat above it. Less skilled draughtsmen restricted themselves to eucalyptus, acacia and similar manipulations, only a naive purchaser would not suspect anything. I wanted to specify whether he wanted his stamps with or without gum, perforations or surcharges.

There was in the nineteenth century a semi-respectable trade in postmarks and postmarks (the prehistoric names of Stanley Gibbons and John Walter Scott were not without value) and the link between engraving and the stamp was a smudged plate brought from the Montenegro government, engraved upon, and engraved in a plate with an additional value that the Montenegro government had omitted to produce, was often crass. Engraving was often crass. Engraving was often crass. Engraving was often crass.

The TLS of November 10, 1926, contained a review by R. D. Ching, of Havelock Ellis: A Biographical and Critical Study, by James G. Thompson, R. D. Ching, for more of his life on the staff of the Times, was its assistant drama critic from 1926 to 1928.

As Dr Goldberg points out, it is in Germany and America, rather than in England, that Mr Havelock Ellis has been given his proper share of recognition. There are two obvious reasons in explanation of this fact. In the first place, we have been rather shy in acknowledging the importance of Mr Ellis's study of sex and of his investigations into sexual pathology in particular. Of more direct significance is the fact that all but the first of the six volumes of the *Studies* were published in America. Dr Goldberg's book, therefore, is to be welcomed, although one cannot fail to deplore the pushing and needlessly personal tone of a great deal of it. There is

It is a way of seeing Dickens that should make some sense. The public readings that he made, his death were a showman's inspired short-cut to his audience, enabling him to rid of the publishers and middlemen he had always wrangled with, and in sum directly the sheer quantity and volume of his appeal. His massive confidence needed increasingly dangerous doses of adulation to sustain it, and the short-lived euphoria of performance seems to have been at least as important to him as the elaborate post-mortem structures of his later novels. So that if television claims him for one of its own (the idea of "doing" Dickens originated with the producer and director Marc Miller) there is an initial fitness about the project. A hard line on Dickens, stressing his ruthlessness, his marketplace genius and his serial attitude to life (always planning a new episode before the last was finished), seems about right for hard times.

That the writer and director intended this kind of corrective treatment is clear from the way they have framed the series with Roy Dotrice as the prematurely aged but looking back over his life on his last, lonely day in America. Putting him in America

German Printing Office; for Adolph Otto stamp-printer to the Transvaal republic, who simply went south of Boston, or that his 1872 Cherry Blossom is inscribed "imagine that there are worse criminals than the eighty-four briefly memorialized in Varro Taylor's *Philarete Forgers* (60pp, Robson 1975). Who could resist a tribute to the safe and sound stamps of the age of sixteen who by the age of sixteen were specialising in spurious overprints of the issues of Sungai Ujong and Zululand, before moving on to such classics as the Tasmanian 4d of 1865, or for the firm of Bentley and Sargy, whose trade card for combed paper promised "fakes of all kinds at the shortest notice". Customers also got fair warning: a small sign in a dim corner of the shop read "I will not be answerable for the genuineness of any stamps sold in this establishment."

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Fifty years on...

The TLS of November 10, 1926, contained a review by R. D. Ching, of Havelock Ellis: A Biographical and Critical Study, by James G. Thompson, R. D. Ching, for more of his life on the staff of the Times, was its assistant drama critic from 1926 to 1928.

As Dr Goldberg points out, it is in Germany and America, rather than in England, that Mr Havelock Ellis has been given his proper share of recognition. There are two obvious reasons in explanation of this fact. In the first place, we have been rather shy in acknowledging the importance of Mr Ellis's study of sex and of his investigations into sexual pathology in particular. Of more direct significance is the fact that all but the first of the six volumes of the *Studies* were published in America. Dr Goldberg's book, therefore, is to be welcomed, although one cannot fail to deplore the pushing and needlessly personal tone of a great deal of it. There is

All of this is interesting, but when you turn from contemplating the strategy to looking at the actual texture of the performance, it is suddenly less plausible. The unknown why Roy Dotrice has matched his make-up in the photographs of Dickens in his later years has itself something ominous about it: his performance is an impersonation, and since (despite contemporary reports) it is difficult to reconstruct Dickens exactly, the impersonation is lifeless, incoherent in the centre. As John Dickens, who has Micawber behind him, he is much better, a convincing liar, scrounger and good companion, rosy, twinkling and predatory, diving off Charles's incipient fame like a vampire. Though even here, Dotrice has allowed the distinction between threadbare humbug and a merely weary performance to lapse, so that the gestures with the restless, but unrolling hands and the conspiratorial whispers become routine. The other Dickens has a pretty thin time: the script obliged thirteen-year-old Simon Bell to behave like a dourish adult, which child actors do anyway, and Gene Roddy's slice made him so vulnerable and impotent that the only way he has been able to convey the humorist who wrote *Pickwick* is by looking out of the corners of his eyes, and tucking in a most restraining manner (as they do in Dickensian). None of the cast seem at home in the curious uncreated limbs they inhabit (speaking the language of characters yet to be invented) so that even the careful background Victorian—the bouncier and amper and grime—are uncomfortable.

What is wrong is that, for all the tough-mindedness about money and role-playing, the series is thoroughly soft-centred when it comes to invention: it lacks invention, and as a result cannot portray it. Last week's episode was the last when young Charles had to be shown literally making something up, and it was done in the stillest biopic tradition: Pickwick is not selling, musing publisher Mr Hall. "You have seen a magnificent Englishman," Don Quixote, Mr D, but some essential ingredient is missing"; later that very evening, after a row with his brother's sympathy to murmur "My dear young Sancho Panza and I have decided to go to the docks." "Sancho, San, Sam, that's it." And Sam Weller is born. It is not just the banality that is offensive, but the assumption that creativity means fastening on some formula, that is waiting coyly in his wings to be discovered ("That's it"). This is not professional or realistic, it is vague, sentimental and evasive, as to the end is Roy Dotrice's loving impersonation of old photographs. Dickens of London was obviously some kind of a fraud, and that Dickens, were he alive now, would be the sort of man who would write for television. The sad fact, evidenced by one prettily series series, is that he is not.

Alfred Benjamin's usurpation of Queen Victoria (see above) was a *jeu d'esprit* not intended for publication. It goes without saying that some of the stamps of the age of sixteen are desired by collectors, that the demand exceeds the supply, and that considerable skill is expended in the detection of forged forgeries.

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We come to the question of Mr Ellis's achievement as a writer. At the outset it may be necessary to state that the *Studies* in the *Psychology of Sex* are his chief claim to consideration. They are a valuable and immensely painstaking contribution to our knowledge of the sex impulse and of sexual phenomena in general. The details of investigation—Freud and other psychoanalysts have frequently referred to their indebtedness to the author of them. The terms auto-eroticism and narcissism were either coined by Mr Ellis or derived from him—the doubt is characteristic of the overlapping in modern scientific and psychological research. But perhaps the most valuable aspect of the earlier volumes is their anticipation of the whole idea of what is nowadays called sublimation. The first of the *Studies* is also the first of the *Studies* to be regarded as general literature, but they fit into the scheme of Mr Ellis's philosophy. The general conception of love as an art, as an art incorporated into

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